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SUBJECT: Lebanon: Media Reaction - June 15, 2009

Atmospherics:

The press underscored the results of the presidential elections in Iran, concluding that Ahmadinejad's victory was a "political decision," meant to be a message to the United States.

Media outlets gave second billing to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's speech, noting in particular his refusal to stop the settlements and his rejection of Palestinians returning to their home country. The press noted that Netanyahu "blew" all peace initiatives and agreements reached during the last three decades, and seemed to "inaugurate a campaign against the Obama Administration and its policies in the Middle East."

Selected Headlines

"Israel Starts A Campaign Against Obama and Netanyahu Blows All Peace Initiatives" Centrist Al-Anwar

"Netanyahu Declares War against the Palestinians until Their Weapons are Removed" Arab nationalist As-Safir

"Netanyahu Accepts a Palestinian State with No Sovereignty: Recognition of Israel's Jewish(ness) and a Solution for the Refugees' Problem Outside Israeli" Moderate, anti-Syrian An-Nahar

"Ahmadinejad Defends His Reelection; Mousavi Contests and Biden Casts Doubts" Moderate, anti-Syrian An-Nahar

"Netanyahu Accepts a 'Distorted' Palestinian State In Exchange for a Jewish Israel" Pro-Sunni Al-Liwa'

Block Quotes:

"An Atomic Bomb," an editorial by Sateh Nouredine in Arab nationalist As-Safir (6/13):

"Iran decided not to change: it did not want to change its President or rhetoric at this point in time. It decided to wait for the next American offer before it presents any concessions for free. Iran believes that it has not been defeated in any of the battles it got involved in during the last four years, particularly its nuclear battle. How and why Iran decided on this course, however, is not something the Iranians can be proud of...By this decision (to keep Ahmadinejad at his post), it looks as if Iran has decided not to meet President Obama half way, because in Iran's view, ...President Obama has not really given anything more than his predecessor. ...In any case, there are those who believe that President Obama has opened up to the Sunni Islamic world, much more than he opened up to the Shi'a Islamic world..."

"The Revolution Eats Its Sons," an editorial by Ghassan Jawad in pro-Sunni Al-Liwa' (6/14):

"It is clear that the return of President Ahmadinejad to his post as

the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran is in fact a radical political decision. We can conclude then that the Iranian leadership has taken a decision to hold negotiations with the new American Administration in its capacity as a radical country. ...Ahmadinejad's return to his post in this manner indicates that leaders in Iran want to send messages inside and outside Iran which say that there will be no change in Iran's policy..."

"The Protector of the Dictionary," an editorial by Ghassan Charbel in pan-Arab Al-Hayat (6/14):

"We are in Iran and not in England or Austria. The democratic game is not open to its fullest limits. It is a democracy that takes place under the pictures of the Imam Kohmeini. ... The Iranian President is neither a policy nor a decision maker. The real decision maker is the Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He has the final saying in foreign policy, defense, security, media, and even culture. The president is only an implementer of Khamenei's policies...Iran chose to continue to exist in the shadow of Ahmadinejad's dictionary, and this dictionary is very far from Obama's dictionary..."

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